

SHOWERS OF QUEER THINGS

FROGS, FISH AND SNAILS REPORTED
TO HAVE FALLEN FROM HEAVEN.

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From The Pall Mall Gazette.

news that "an abundant shower of frogs has fallen at Bizerta after a storm." It is added that the largest were the size of a man's thumb. Unfortunately that is all the information vouchsafed. We are left to conjecture what the Arabs thought of this strange visitation. It may be they are anticipating all sorts of mischief as a result of this manifestation of the mysterious forces of nature.

Frogs have often been mentioned as falling from the clouds with rain. It is not safe, however, to rely implicitly on all the statements, for it is not safe to assume that in most cases, if not in all, the innocent batrachians did not come down in the rain. In "Plot's History of Staffordshire" it is asserted that frogs frequently fell on Lord Aston's bowling green in showers of rain, so that in that locality "frog rains" ought to

to be thought supernatural. Rome has long been supposed to be a favorite dumping-ground for aerial frogs and the inhabitants still love to believe that the reptiles descend from the sky. Even in the British Isles there are records of frog showers as far back as the first century, and one of white frogs was reported from Birmingham the other day. Theophrastus of old had given a re-

reasonable explanation of the appearance of frogs after rain; but as it was not half mysterious enough for people steeped in superstition, nobody cared to remember it. The amphibians are more at home in water, perhaps, than they are on dry land, and any person with half an eye has noticed that, on a dry weather particularly, a shower of rain brings out every toad and frog in the neighborhood. It is to be feared, therefore, that the only curious feature

ure of the Elzetta frog shower is the fact that even now there should be such a mass of popular opinion still favorable to taking a miraculous view of such phenomena.

OTHER CURIOUS VISITATIONS.

But frogs are not the only things that mystify mankind in this way. Only recently there were

long accounts in some of the French newspapers of a very abundant shower of soles round a village in the Dordogne region. One morning the innabundants went out of doors to find that, while they had been asleep, a merciful Providence had rained down great quantities of soles, that were scattered about the roadways, fields, gardens and courtyards. The simple folk were divided in opinion as to what should be done. The more irreverent

went" at this providential feast with a will, while the devout and superstitious beheld the scene with horror, thinking it must be a portent of impending trouble either to the district or to the nation. It so happened that the night these soles were thus deposited, amid a rural population ninety miles from the sea, was a very stormy one; there had been whirlwinds and waterspouts on the shores

the Bay of Chesapeake, and a high westerly wind swept inland, accompanied by torrents of rain. It seems highly probable, therefore, that the violent tornado on the coast whipped up all the zoles that came within its reach, and carried them up-country as much to the astonishment of the fish as to that of the simple-minded villagers, who were enabled to hold high carnival at the bare expense of cooking.

to be made the sport of the winds. There is a well-authenticated case of many thousands of herring from an inch to three inches in length, being scattered round Edinburgh during an easterly storm in 1817, the natural home of the visitors being the Firth of Forth, hard by. At various times with the present century several similar fish stories have come from Scotland, and Scots, we know, do not

judge in Kent. Neither are we wanting in corroborative testimony on this side of the border. To mention only two or three instances at random. In Hasted's "History of Kent" we read of a show of small fish in the parish of Stanstead, above Canter, 1563, during a gale of wind, with thunder and rain, the fish being afterward sold publicly at Maidstone and Dartford. June, 1841, witnessed fair of fish in Lincolnshire, and, in the following month,

Derbyshire had its share of the spoil, the weather at the time being so very hot that the clouds were considerably sent down a supply of ice, in the shape of great hailstones, to preserve the fish.

Coming down to more recent dates, we have the fact attested that at midday on July 29, 1886, there was a heavy fall of shellfish near Camborne, Cornwall, thousands of them being gathered, and

the inhabitants of the shells found to be alive. The raining of fish in other countries there are countless instances—in France, India, Italy, the United States and elsewhere, even such high elevations as Quito, in the Andes, being visited now and again.

SNAILS ANKLE DEEP.

A snailstorm on a large scale does not seem ve

probably, yet on September 1, 1821, a Tenbury Gloucestershire, there was a remarkable sea, six acres of ground being covered ankle deep with snails. There is even a report of a snail—dead—one—having fallen from the clouds on to the deck of a ship in midocean; but, although the incident was vouched for by the captain, officers and chain, the probability is that as the snail was dead and, ostensibly so, it had only dropped from

While these appearances of animate objects have always excited not only much curiosity, but a small amount of fear on the part of the masses, the people, the mysterious manifestations of other and apparently inanimate objects have always been accepted as portents of a much more terrible nature, auguring very grave private or national misfortune. Perhaps the most famous episode of this

so-called rain of blood, a phenomenon that, innocuous and harmless as it is, has always been looked upon as of the most terrible significance. Red rain seems to be universal in its distribution, and the earliest of the British historians record instances of its occurrence in this country. Matthew Westminster does not scruple to say that in the year 541, real blood rained out of the clouds. A

It is not in the least surprising, under the circumstances, that "a terrible mortality of men followed." Microscopic examination shows that this red appearance is due to myriads of tiny fleas, *Pulex arborescentes*, swarming from the banks of ponds and lakes, and not falling from the clouds. In the same way the painful whiteness of the Arctic or Alpine landscape is now and again relieved by a faint tinge of red or pink, and the

close inspection proves that no red snow has fallen, but that the surface of the snow is covered with swarms of an infinitely small insect—the *Protococcus nivalis*.

Next, to blood, the most suggestive thing is sulphur, for now the untutored mind can run riot and conjure up all sorts of horrible fancies. Sulphur, however, have proved to be nothing at all.

than the yellow pollen of flowers in extensive nurseries wafted by a wind strong enough to beat it many miles away. The same may be said of black rains—round London they are produced by soot from our myriad chimneys. In places far removed from towns—as in the northeast of Scotland in 1862 and 1863—volcanic outbursts accounted for the deposition of pumice stones up to half a pound in weight. Of showers of wheat, hay and other

trifles there are many records. They are all natural consequences of very ordinary circumstances.

PROFITS OF COPPER MINING.

From The Providence Journal.

Beyond question the two most prosperous sections of the United States, at the present time and

several years past, are the Butte, Mont., copper district and the Lake Superior copper district. With wages as high as before the panic of 1893, with more mines working, more men employed, larger production, cheaper cost of producing and larger profits to the stockholders, the residents of the two great American copper fields and the people who have money invested in their industries

The principal, if not the sole, reason for the good times enjoyed by the copper districts is found in the enormous foreign demand for the product of the mines. Of the 1895 American production over 60 per cent was exported, and for the 6 months ending

cent was exported, and for the first half of the current year the exports have exceeded 50 per cent of the output. The world's supply of visible copper continues to slowly but steadily decrease, being at present less than thirty-three thousand tons, although the American mines have increased the production steadily for a number of years past. The outlook for the copper producers could hardly be better, for with a general revival of business

The vast profits of the richer mines are shown by the following table, setting forth the dividends paid to date by fifteen Lake Superior mine

Atlantic, \$1,000,000; Chatham and Hecla, \$43,500,000; Central, \$1,370,000; Cliff, \$2,518,620; Copper Falls, \$160,000; Franklin, \$1,280,000; Kearsarge, \$120,000; Minnesota, \$1,820,000; National, \$359,255; Osceola, \$2,121,500; Pewabic, \$460,000; Phoenix, \$20,000; Quincy, \$8,070,000; Ridge, \$100,000; Tamarack, \$1,830,000; total, \$71,860,375.

During the period of developing these mines assessments amounting to \$7,869,500 were levied, less

ing net profits of \$96,990,875. In addition to this, the present value of these mines is in excess of \$90,000,000 at current quotations on the Boston Exchange where all the leading copper shares of Michigan and Montana are listed and extensively traded. Eight of these fifteen mines are still in active operation. One, the Pewabic, has been absorbed by a larger and more powerful neighbor, the Quincy, which now forms a rich and productive north-

which it now turns a men and productive power. The Cliff, Minnesota and National mines, the former in Keeweenaw and the two latter in Ontonagon County, which were the banner dividend payers of the early period, are now closed, though there are many old mining men who affirm, with good show of reason, that these old mines, reopened and equipped with modern machinery and mills, could again make big profits for their owners.

tors. The Copper Falls, in Keweenaw County, will probably be consolidated soon with its neighbor, the Arnold, and again worked. The Centra mine, for the abandonment of which all preparations were made three years ago, is still a producer and is looking better than for years.

During the past twelve months larger dividends have been paid by the Lake Superior mines than ever before in the same period of time. The great

Calumet and Hecla, the richest mine in the world with dividends of \$40 per share, a total of \$1,000,000, followed by the Quincy, with a round million of profits paid stockholders. The Tamarac paid \$350,000, and the Osceola, Kearsarge and Atlantic also paid handsomely.

The Governor's indorsement upon one legislative bill which was vetoed by him was as follows: "This bill is incorrectly engrossed, furnishing another instance of the frequent blunders which the engrossing department of the House of Assembly has committed, rendering bills otherwise meritorious."

This commentary is probably as severe as an Executive of this State has ever had occasion to pass upon a department of the legislative branch. The engrossing clerk of the Assembly is Lyander P. Watson, of Monmouth County. It will be interesting to observe whether he will be a candidate for re-election.